

4397A

Light is shed by the interview with Mr. K. S. Lee:

When the seamen threatened to strike, said Mr. Lee, "the owners thought they were not serious and were only taking advantage of the China New Year holidays."

The shipowner, at a meeting, is reported to have said that the seamen would be starving in a week and they would be forced to resume their work anyhow.

Then at the first meeting with the Union leaders, the Secretary for Chinese Affairs in the Colony, Mr. Hallfax, is reported to have bluffed the men and stated that that—the first meeting—would be the final one and that the men would be given no further chance—others would be employed to take their places, if they did not return to work at once.

Can one wonder that workmen strike for better conditions, when on their own showing their masters rely on the weapons of starvation and denial? I am not surprised that the seamen are standing out for their terms. Like countless other organised bodies of workmen, they decline to be bluffed.

Much has been said by the employers' side about the Canton Government, with the idea of discrediting that Government and belittling the efforts of the seamen to improve their condition.

See C. R. File A 1212

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